

# Mindfulness at Work

(Published at the request of Judith Weigand, LACDMH Compliance Officer)

Often we're reminded how important it is to have routine checkups and to exercise for our physical health. It's equally as important to take the time to assess and develop our "emotional intelligence." Like anything, to improve and to be successful, we have to have the right attitude.

According to a Mind Tools.com article,<sup>1</sup> emotional intelligence is "the ability to recognize your emotions, understand what they're telling you, and realize how your emotions affect people around you. It also involves your perception of others: when you understand how they feel, this allows you to manage relationships more effectively." Daniel Goleman, American psychologist and author of "Emotional Intelligence: Why it can matter more than IQ", addresses emotional intelligence as the following five elements: (1) Self-Awareness; (2) Self-Regulation; (3) Motivation; (4) Empathy; and (5) Social Skills.

Individuals who have poor emotional intelligence tend to overreact or behave abrasively when they are disappointed, under pressure, fearful, or upset about a situation or with someone. Most likely, we have all experienced situations when either we, or another person, have created a tense and uncomfortable atmosphere. We don't want to be the sort of people who wear our emotions on our sleeves or be the sort of person that people dread being around. Our ability to control our reactions when we encounter strong emotion is important, because our reactions and interactions can either deteriorate or build trust and greatly impacts relationships and organizational culture. Reaction can also create pressure for others and act as a catalyst for employees to make bad decisions that result in unethical or non-compliant situations.

It's important that when we feel under pressure to do something that doesn't seem right, we seek the support of others to help us make the right decision. To take an action simply to remove the immediate pressure someone placed on us can be a costly mistake. We should always be careful when we are being pressured to act in disregard of established standards and potential consequences. Generally, employees are encouraged to first bring their concerns and situations to their supervisors

or line of authority; however, it's perfectly acceptable to seek support and guidance from a compliance professional at any time, especially if the decision may lead to violating a policy, law, or other standards. We need to always consider whether the consequences may harm ourselves, others, our customers, and/or the organization.

Daniel Goleman said, "If your emotional abilities aren't in hand, if you don't have self-awareness, if you are not able to manage your distressing emotions, if you can't have empathy and have effective relationships, then no matter how smart you are, you are not going to get very far." We need to have a teachable, humble and accountable attitude to be able to develop and improve our emotional intelligence. As we improve in managing our emotions and reactions, we will be better leaders, supervisors, employees, and better people in general. We will be successful in relationships and help influence an ethical and compliant organizational culture.

<sup>1</sup> Mind Tools Editorial Team: "Emotional Intelligence: Developing Strong "People Skills" available at [https://www.mindtools.com/pages/article/newCDV\\_59.htm](https://www.mindtools.com/pages/article/newCDV_59.htm)